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16. FROM ARUSHA TO KARLSRUHE, AND BEYOND

Reflections on the Future of Mission

Risto Jukko

The World Council of Churches (WCC) Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in Arusha, Tanzania, in 2018 has been a remarkable lens through which we can look at the future of mission and of the ecumenical movement. The constituencies of the Arusha Conference and their denominational, spiritual, and theological backgrounds have been ecumenically much wider than the list of member churches of the WCC.¹ This is why the Arusha Conference has not only been a conference on world mission and evangelism, it has been a great conference on Christian unity. This conference has been much more ecumenical than, for instance, the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910, which is generally called the starting point of the modern ecumenical movement.² Basically, one can argue, the ecumenical – in the original meaning of the Greek word *oikoumene*, “universal”³ – mission was gathered in Arusha, Tanzania. This Arusha report convincingly illustrates the fact.

Jesus’ words at the beginning of John 17:21 (“that they may all be one”) are often quoted by leaders of churches and of the ecumenical movement when stressing Jesus’ will of the unity of his followers, that is, the need for unity of all Christians. However, nobody should make a truncated reading of John 17:21 – reading only the beginning of the verse, quoted above – because the verse ends with Jesus’ words expressing clearly that the unity of his followers is not unity in itself: the unity of Christians has consequences and purpose in the same way as trinitarian unity has consequences: “that the world may believe that you [Father] have sent me [Jesus].” If the absolute intratrinitarian unity had not included the sending [in Latin: *missio*] of the Son and the Spirit, there would have been no Christian church or mission.

1. WCC member churches: <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/member-churches>.

2. See, e.g., Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2009).

3. See, e.g., Norman E. Thomas, *Missions and Unity: Lessons from History, 1792–2010* (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books, 2010), xxiv; Willem Visser ‘t Hooft, “The Word ‘Ecumenical’: Its History and Use,” in Ruth Rouse and Stephen Charles Neill, eds, *A History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517–1948* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1986), 735–40.

Jesus' commission to go and make disciples (Matt. 28:18-20) is still valid and engaging to every church and individual Christian. Based on their unity in Christ (e.g., Eph. 2:14-16), all Christians are sent out and together are called to be witnesses to the risen Christ "that the world may believe." In the same way as the modern ecumenical movement, embodied to a large extent by the World Council of Churches, was born out of mission, the Arusha Conference on World Mission and Evangelism was conceived by the unity of Christians: unity in mission, and mission in unity.⁴ Along with Pope Francis' historical visit to the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva in June 2018, the Arusha Conference was probably the most ecumenically extensive expression of the church's unity and mission by the World Council of Churches in its 70 years, its jubilee year.⁵ It has been a real display window of the unity and mission of all Christians, going beyond the limits of the official structures of the ecumenical movement.

The ecumenical movement has two theological founding pillars: unity and mission.⁶ They both need one another, and they both depend on one another. Mission is always ecumenical by nature, and unity always has the missionary dimension (John 17:21). Christians cannot do mission in Christ's way (see, e.g., Luke 4:18-19) if they are not united and their witness is not common. But the followers of Jesus cannot "do unity," that is, be united and be in fellowship with one another, without being "sent," like the Son and the Spirit, and involved in giving common witness through their unity. That may be

4. The moderator of the WCC Commission on Faith and Order, Rev. Dr Susan Durber, emphasized this in Arusha 2018 and her contribution to this publication: "The ecumenical movement has always begun with mission."

5. See <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/about-us/wcc-history>. The World Council of Churches was founded in 1948, 38 years after the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910, and 27 years after the foundation of the International Missionary Council (IMC) in Lake Mohonk, USA, in 1921. On the IMC, see, e.g., William Richey Hogg, *Ecumenical Foundations: A History of the International Missionary Council and Its Nineteenth-Century Background* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952); Tom Stransky, "International Missionary Council," in Nicholas Lossky et al., eds, *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2002), 595–98.

6. E.g., Philip Potter, director of the World Council of Churches' Division of World Mission and Evangelism (1967–1972), said in his report on the Assembly of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism in Bangkok 1972/1973 that "as we learned from the beginning of the ecumenical movement, the issues of unity and mission are inextricably bound together." Philip Potter, "Christ's Mission and Ours in Today's World," in *Bangkok Assembly 1973. Minutes and Report of the Assembly of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches, December 31, 1972 and January 9-12, 1973* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1973), 51–63, at 59. Potter later served as the general secretary of the World Council of Churches from 1972 to 1984.

one of the problems of “table ecumenism”⁷ at a high level, when ecumenical discussions and celebrations become detached from the life and questions of Christians in local congregations.

Both mission and unity have found their structural expression within the WCC in the form of two commissions. Mission has found its structure in the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME), which had its beginning in New Delhi in 1961 when the International Missionary Council merged with the World Council of Churches in the 3rd General Assembly of the WCC.⁸ Unity has found its structural expression in the Commission on Faith and Order, concentrating largely on ecclesiological questions.⁹ However, mission is not only practice and worship, it is also theology, and ecclesiology is not only theology, it is practice and worship as well.

In Arusha 2018, the then-director of CWME, Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum from South Korea, mentioned in his director’s report three dimensions or vantage points by which mission can foster and strengthen the unity of Christians and the ecumenical movement, and in particular the WCC, in the near future.¹⁰ The first vantage point is mission’s prophetic role. In this rapidly changing ecclesial, political, and ecological landscape of ours, mission can offer a holistic approach bringing unity, mission, justice, and peace together. The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace is an initiative of the WCC member churches, and especially the theological emphases and practical activities of “mission from the margins,” as mentioned in the WCC mission document *Together towards Life*: promoting justice and peace plays a prophetic role in and for this pilgrimage (§§36–54).¹¹ Mission helps the ecumenical movement and the WCC by connecting people, their stories, and their contexts. Today’s missiologists often and keenly refer to the story

7. “Discussing mission only in a meeting room, or table ecumenism, is never enough.” Jooseop Keum, former director of the WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, at Arusha 2018 (see chapter 9 of this publication).

8. See, e.g., Donald W. Norwood, ed., *Pilgrimage of Faith: Introducing the World Council of Churches* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2018), 36–53.

9. Faith and Order had its first meeting in Lausanne in 1927, 21 years before the foundation of the World Council of Churches, but it joined the WCC in 1948. See Tislington Tatlow, “The World Conference on Faith and Order,” in Rouse and Neill, eds, *A History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517–1948*, 405–41; Günther Gassman, “Faith and Order,” in Lossky et al., eds, *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 461–63.

10. See chapter 9 in this publication.

11. See Jooseop Keum, ed., *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes – with a Practical Guide* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2013), 14–21, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/mission-and-evangelism/together-towards-life-mission-and-evangelism-in-changing-landscapes>.

of the road to Emmaus, where the risen Jesus walked with two disciples and encountered and engaged them in a powerful way (Luke 24:13-35). This is an example of God's mission in which Jesus meets normal human beings with their stories, life situations, and backgrounds. Their immediate reaction – “that same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem” – is the result of this encounter. They go and witness to this encounter with the risen Lord (verses 33-34). For many participants, the Arusha Conference on World Mission and Evangelism has been an experience and example of this close connection of other people's stories and their contexts meeting other Christians and the risen Christ.

Another way in which mission fosters the unity of Christians and the ecumenical movement, and in particular the World Council of Churches, is the support it can offer to renew the structures, organizations, and institutions. It is clear that mission by its very nature is not, and cannot be limited to, a mission agency, a church's mission department, or the WCC's programme, project, or commission. Theologically and conceptually understood, mission cannot be placed in an institutional, structural, or programmatic box. If mission must be described, it can be said to be a dynamic movement, Christians participating in the mission of the triune God (e.g., John 15:26-27; John 16:7; Matt. 10:16; Mark 16:16; Luke 24:48-49). David J. Bosch has famously said that “the definition of mission is a continual process of sifting, testing, reformulating, and discarding.”¹²

All human organizations – Christian or not, business enterprises or non-profit organizations – have an inadvertent tendency, as the years go by, to slowly begin to serve their own institutional or organizational interests. Often an increasing amount of energy and resources is spent in making sure that the institution itself can continue to function, and its own existence is guaranteed. Challenging organizational introversion, mission can bring creativity, new ideas, and visions into this kind of situation, can remind churches and Christian organizations why they exist, and can make them reorient themselves toward the outside world, the neighbour and creation, and help them find their inherent missionary nature and joy in participating in God's mission. As mission is always on the move, it can build bridges between churches and institutions through missiological imagination and action. For this purpose, too, it is clearly said in the by-laws of the WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism that mission and evangelism “have a structured place at the heart of the WCC.”¹³ The structured place should guarantee a renewing

12. David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books 2008 [1991]), 511.

13. World Council of Churches, “By-Laws of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism as adopted by the WCC Central Committee in 2016,” 1.

dimension of mission to have space within the ecumenical movement and to resist the temptation to concentrate only on programmes, administration, and organization. However, it can be legitimately asked today: Where do we find mission in the structures of churches and in the ecumenical movement? Where is missiology in theological education and formation of future church co-workers?

The third vantage point of mission within the life of churches and the ecumenical movement is to remind them that there is a theological distinction between them and humanitarian or development organizations (NGOs), and that mission is an inherent characteristic and dimension of the church. One of the great theological discoveries since the International Missionary Council conference in Willingen, Germany, in 1952 has been the central role of the church and local congregations in mission. A local congregation is not a development agency. Its origin, purpose, self-understanding, and *raison d'être* are different (see Acts 2). A major theological and ecclesiological difference is that "local congregations have the privilege of forming a community marked by the presence of the risen Christ." (*Together towards Life*, §73).¹⁴ A local congregation, by its nature, is a primary agent in God's mission. Even if some activities of NGOs and local congregations – as well as mission agencies – might look the same when observed from the outside, and even empirical research would give similar results of their humanitarian or *diakonia* or development activities, there is a theological difference: local congregations are primary agents of mission.

On the level of local congregations and the everyday life of Christians, the Arusha Conference Report¹⁵ presents five themes that the Conference Harvesting Committee suggested to the conference participants and wider constituencies in world mission. First, they should call sustained attention to mission as transforming discipleship in light of the reception of the Arusha Call to Discipleship 2018.¹⁶ The second theme is mission from the margins as a paradigm for our time. Third, mission and evangelism in a multi-religious world is proposed as one central topic. It has been dealt with at least since 2011, when the ecumenical document *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World*¹⁷ was published. The fourth proposed theme is the relationship of mis-

14. Keum, ed., *Together towards Life*, 27.

15. See chapter 2 in this publication. Also in *International Review of Mission* 107:2 (Dec. 2018), 547–60.

16. See chapter 1 in this publication. Also in *International Review of Mission* 107:2 (Dec. 2018), 542–43.

17. <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/interreligious-dialogue-and-cooperation/christian-identity-in-pluralistic-societies/christian-witness-in-a-multi-religious-world>.

sion, evangelism, and development work. And fifth comes the relationship of costly discipleship and Christian unity.¹⁸

Discipleship and Christian Unity

In light of what is said above, in relation to the Christ-connected way of life mentioned in the Arusha Call to Discipleship, and in relation to the theme of the WCC's 11th assembly in Karlsruhe, Germany, in 2021, "Christ's Love Moves the World to Reconciliation and Unity" (see 2 Cor. 5:18-21), I will deal here with the relationship of discipleship and Christian unity, which is already, and will be most probably even more, an important missiological theme in the years to come.

To start with, the word "disciple" or "discipleship" (in Greek: μαθητης or mathētēs) can be found in the gospels and the Book of Acts 261 times, basically describing the followers of Jesus.¹⁹ Jesus called people to follow him, so discipleship cannot be something an individual takes as a decision prior to contact with Jesus or with his followers or without having ever heard of Jesus. Nobody becomes a disciple of Jesus by accident (see, e.g., John 1:48; John 15:16). When we think of Jesus' words in the Gospel according to Matthew 10:37-39 (cf. Luke 14:26-27) and of the apostles whom Jesus called through a personal invitation to follow him, the adjective "costly" may sound strange and even redundant, as 11 of the 12 closest disciples of Jesus were killed because they followed him and had faith in him, that is, because of their discipleship. They followed Jesus' words and example to the end (see John 15:13).

As the lives and deaths of the 12 apostles show, discipleship and mission are more than closely connected. At the end of the Gospel according to Matthew we have what is commonly called the Great Commission. Mission, and especially the modern mission movement, has been much inspired by the words of Jesus when he says, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:18-20). The Greek verb forms of this passage reveal some interesting dimensions of discipleship. "Going" has been much emphasized, but reading the Greek text in verses 19 and

18. As can be noted, there is a thematic overlapping between these topics. This is especially true of the first and the last issue concerning discipleship overlap; the same can be noticed about the third and the fourth issue, concerning mission and evangelism. The Arusha Conference Report was drafted and finalized during the conference itself in March 2018.

19. https://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/tbv2i7_fosterdiscipleship.pdf.

20, it literally says “πορευθέντες,” that is, “going”; “μαθητεύσατε,” “make disciples” (imperative form); “βαπτίζοντες,” “baptizing”; “διδάσκοντες,” “teaching.” Out of these four verb forms only one, “make disciples,” is in the imperative form; the other forms are participle forms. It seems that Jesus is underlining going and disciple making, which consists of “baptizing” and “teaching.” This brief linguistic analysis of the pericope means that we cannot ignore disciple making (and not, of course, going), which describes a change of a person from being a non-disciple to being a disciple of Jesus. A spiritual, ontological, and qualitative change of a person is a work and gift of God, made possible when the witnesses of the risen Christ go to all nations and baptize and teach people.

Many traditional churches, especially in the global North, hardly mention the word “disciple” or “discipleship” in their ecclesial vocabulary, with the possible exception of the pulpit. They have traditionally baptized and offered Christian education in the form of catechism. Now baptism and Christian education have increasingly become an issue, especially in Europe and North America, where a decreasing number of people are baptized and an increasing number of people who have been baptized are unaware (in the sense of being uneducated) of, or are indifferent to, the meaning of baptism, to say nothing of the basics of the Christian faith, and many of them are leaving the membership of a church. If Christian discipleship means being actively involved in, and engaged with, God’s mission in the world, it also means Christians leaving the church buildings and going outside, to all nations. “All nations” can be found right on the home street, or at least possibly not so far from it – if we are ready to go and make disciples.²⁰

In the Gospel according to Mark, we read that Jesus “appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message” (Mark 3:14). Interestingly enough, an important aspect of being a disciple or a follower of Jesus is “to be with him.” It seems that it is an essential condition of Christian discipleship. Both the words of Jesus in Matthew as well as the apostle Paul’s words to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 5) refer to the fact that discipleship can be said to be a state of existence or being. Discipleship means *being* a disciple of somebody. Being a disciple of Jesus means being in a continuous relationship with him. Jesus says in the Gospel according to John: “The Father and I are one.” (John 10:30). The relationship between God the Father and God the Son is unbroken and eternal.²¹

20. For more on mission and evangelism in Europe see, e.g., Gerrit Noort, Kyriaki Avtzi, and Stefan Paas, eds, *Sharing Good News: Handbook on Evangelism in Europe* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2017).

21. Rowan Williams, *Being Disciples: Essentials of the Christian Life* (Grand Rapids, Mich.:

In the same way, the disciple of Jesus is expected to have an unbroken and continuous relationship with Jesus, to be with Jesus.

Being with Jesus and being sent out to proclaim the gospel message means at least three things in a practical sense.²² First, it means nurturing and taking care of the spiritual or devotional dimension of being a Christian: regular reading and studying of the Bible and praying, as well as taking part in the communion (sacraments) and the life of a Christian community.²³ Even if the call to discipleship is individual and personal, disciples are interconnected and live in the fellowship and community with one another. Second, this state of “being-continuously-with-Jesus” causes in his disciples a new type of attentiveness to all people, places, and phenomena in life, looking at everyone and everything with expectancy and hope. Christians are not escapists, but they know that there is hope for the future. And third, it means – and here we come to the practical dimension of mission – approaching and meeting those people Christ is already with. These are people with characteristics we can find in the gospels, very often people in the margins, but not only them. Jesus meets all kinds of people in the gospels. This third aspect strengthens and makes visible the characteristics of Christians whom Pope Francis has called “missionary disciples.”²⁴ “Missionary disciples” of Jesus are transforming disciples. In the same way as they are transformed by the continuous being with Jesus, they themselves are transforming actors changing their environment near and far.

One way of seeing the relationship between discipleship and Christian unity is to see it through the theme of the next WCC Assembly in Karlsruhe in 2021: “Christ’s Love Moves the World to Reconciliation and Unity.” Mission and unity are based on reconciliation and Christ’s love. The biblical reference of the next WCC assembly theme can be found in 2 Corinthians 5: “And he [Christ] died for all, so that those who live might live no longer

Eerdmans, 2016), 12–15, refers to Jesus’ words in John 12:26a: “Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also.” Based on this, he argues that the state of being of Jesus’ disciple includes not only mission – proclamation and *diakonia* – and unity, but also closeness to the Father. Williams concludes that “the heart of discipleship is bound up with the life of the Trinity” (15).

22. I loosely follow here Williams, *Being Disciples*, 16.

23. See, e.g., Wonsuk Ma and Kenneth R. Ross, eds, *Mission Spirituality and Authentic Discipleship* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2013), in which the articles strongly link spirituality with discipleship.

24. “Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are ‘disciples’ and ‘missionaries’, but rather that we are always ‘missionary disciples.’” Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013), §120, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html.

for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. ... God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation ... For our sake he [God] made him [Christ] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:15, 18, 21). Reconciliation and discipleship belong together, as "a radical cross-centred reconciliation cannot be separated from the call to radical obedient discipleship."²⁵ In this sense discipleship is said to be "costly," as God made Christ to be sin, for human beings and their reconciliation. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (John 3:16).

The biblical passages cited show how mission, unity, and missionary discipleship are all based in God's reconciliatory action in Christ. The emphasis of reconciliation in mission has been a pertinent theme in mission studies and practice at least since the 1990s, and became more visible in the ecumenical mission movement at the WCC Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in Athens in 2005, and has been important topic since then.²⁶ The theological and practical consequences of reconciliation will engage mission and missiological reflection for years to come, and show, once more, how mission and unity are intertwined.²⁷ Mission includes this reconciliatory aspect that leads to unity. In fact, reconciliation has three important dimensions: between God and human beings, between human beings themselves (and within themselves), and of the creation or cosmos (see Rom. 8:22).

God reconciling creation, translated into a theological emphasis on ecological and environmental questions, is something so evident and urgent that mission cannot simply ignore it, as it affects the world everywhere. Theology of creation helps Christians to see that human beings are not authorized to wound nature or destroy it in a fatal way. Humanity does not own God's creation, but is responsible for it. The WCC mission statement *Together towards Life* deals with ecological issues from the mission point of view. It says very clearly: "Excessive greed and unlimited consumption which lead to continuous destruction of nature must end. ... Mission has creation at its heart."²⁸

25. Robert Schreiter and Knud Jørgensen, eds, *Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2013), 4.

26. Robert J. Schreiter published his seminal *The Ministry of Reconciliation: Spirituality and Strategies* in 1998 (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books). The Report of the WCC Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, Athens, Greece, May 2005, edited by Jacques Matthey, has as its title "*Come, Holy Spirit, Heal and Reconcile!*" (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2008); Schreiter and Jørgensen published their *Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation* in 2013.

27. See, e.g., Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 463–67.

28. Keum, ed., *Together towards Life*, 38.

As mission has creation at its heart, it must take ecological and environmental questions very seriously, both in the church as well as in society. The challenge is no more or less than the survival of the globe and humanity. The common vision of the preservation of the planet should bring Christians and churches even closer to another, and beyond, together with other world religions, and with all people of goodwill, work for the preservation of the nature and the survival of the creation. The prophetic voice of the church should be raised everywhere to speak for the creation and urge everyone to take action. If this is not done, there will be a huge eco-catastrophe facing creation and all human beings. What is even worse, the consequences of environmental destruction are often felt first by those who are already suffering and in a vulnerable position, in the margins. Every church and mission body should have an environmental plan, as Christian discipleship naturally includes responsible, environmentally sustainable individual and communal behaviour.²⁹

To conclude, in the face of all the challenges ecumenical mission is facing and will face in the near future, two dimensions seem to me to be decisive for the future of Christianity and mission. The first brings us back to the meanings of the word “ecumenical,” *oikoumene*. There is a need to overcome the dispersion and division among Christians and churches, and a need to understand that mission can be done only ecumenically, that is, Christians together. This does not mean that there should be only one global mega-church, but there is no future if Christians cannot understand each other better and find their fundamental unity and, based on that, work together for the best of their neighbours and for this world, threatened by human sinfulness. This must be done “not only because the task [mission] before us is too immense to be credibly and effectively tackled by a fragmented church, but because the very nature of mission militates against this kind of ecclesiastical empire building.”³⁰ The composition of the WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism is a sign of hope in that the members of the commission, with their various theological, denominational, and spiritual backgrounds, are ecumenically from a much wider spectrum than the list of member churches of the WCC itself.³¹ The old misunderstandings between the “ecumenical” and “evangelical” mission movements concerning the contents and nature of mission, dating back to the 1960s and 1970s, should be left behind for the sake

29. See, e.g., Kapyia J. Kaoma, ed., *Creation Care in Christian Mission* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2015).

30. David J. Bosch, *Believing in the Future: Toward a Missiology of Western Culture* (Valley Forge, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1995), 58.

31. The same remark also concerns the WCC Commission on Faith and Order.

of unity and mission. There is only one God, and only one God's mission in which we all together are called to participate (see Eph. 4:4-6).

The second factor, the role of which is increasingly gaining in importance on the level of both theology and practice of mission is the local congregation. We cannot speak about mission without speaking about church. The theme of a "missionary structure of the congregation" was studied within the frame of the WCC in the 1960s,³² but when the world is becoming increasingly globalized and localized at the same time, and mission has become multi-directional and many-faceted, the role of a local congregation in God's mission cannot be overestimated. A local congregation is responsible for mission and unity in the context and environment it is celebrating and living. The responsibility for mission and unity cannot be taken by any other, be it regional, national, or global church body or organization, because they do not daily meet local people in the same way as local Christians see and meet them. The local congregation has to take seriously God's reconciliation and look for unity and mission with other churches and fellowships. This unity is an encouragement for an ever-deepening individual and communal discipleship and, at the same time, a call to mission, as it leads the members of a local congregation to go out "that the world may believe."

What is happening in many churches, especially in the global South, is an encouragement to many churches in the global North. Churches in the South, especially in Africa and Latin America, but also in many places in Asia, are growing, as they are reaching out and witnessing to the risen Christ on a local level. They have agency and they are showing a concrete example of mission from the margins, doing evangelism, serving people, fostering unity of Christians, doing advocacy, and working for justice and peace. They have a prophetic voice for those vulnerable groups of people in the margins of their societies that are excluded and discriminated, sometimes with violence, be it women, youth, Indigenous people, Blacks, LGBT people, or any other group.

The practice of mission is only as strong as Christians, disciples of Jesus, are, faithfully giving witness to the risen Lord together with other Christians, with courtesy and respect (see 1 Pet. 3:15-16). Mission is always more, because God and God's mission are always more than a visible empirical project to be evaluated by administrators – which is important, too. But the impact of the Christians of a local congregation, living as Jesus' disciples, on their context and environment is not only an empirical mission project. An inherently missionary church, embodying the universal church and participating locally in

32. It was a 1961–1966 study project called "The Missionary Structure of the Congregation" (see, e.g., Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 382–84). The final report was published by the WCC: *The Church for Others and the Church for the World* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1967).

God's mission, is not a measurable programme. It cannot be, as it is the Spirit of God who inspires Christians to a kenotic lifestyle and cross-bearing and accompanies God's people in their witness to the incarnate, crucified, resurrected, and ascended Christ, present among his people in the Spirit.³³ Christ's love moves us all to reconciliation, unity, and mission, and Christ himself takes us into his future.

33. Keum, ed., *Together towards Life*, 37; Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 518.